

0478

March 21, 2010

The Honorable Julius Genachowski
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

We write to share concerns over the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) rulemaking on the roaming obligations of commercial wireless providers. The Commission's action in August 2007 clarifying the roaming obligations of providers for voice services, was a step forward for consumers. However, the Commission's work remains incomplete, and it should advance on data roaming in a timely manner.

We appreciate the Commission's discussion in the National Broadband Plan about the need to move forward on the open proceeding on data roaming agreements. While we understand the plan also calls for proceedings on many other important and complex issues impacting our country's telecommunications policy, we urge the FCC to act quickly with regards to the roaming proceeding.

Every American owning a wireless device expects seamless connectivity. We believe the Commission has ample authority under the Communications Act to require automatic roaming for wireless data services and help satisfy consumer expectations. As you know, widespread access to wireless service is increasingly essential to our economy, public safety, and national security. Commission action on data roaming will help ensure Americans have the ability to communicate regardless of where they live or travel.

These issues are particularly acute for rural and remote communities across the country, not just those in Alaska and Mississippi. People in rural and remote areas have far fewer choices and usually pay more than their urban counterparts. The availability of roaming services in these areas at reasonable rates is exceptionally important.

Data roaming is a fundamental building block for wireless broadband deployment and access to wireless data and voice services. Americans in rural communities deserve the same kind and quality of advanced telecommunications services as those residents of urban areas enjoy. We urge the Commission to act promptly to require licensees to negotiate automatic data roaming agreements where technologically feasible.

Sincerely,



Mark Begich
United States Senator



Roger Wicker
United States Senator

cc: Commissioner Michael J. Copps
Commissioner Robert M. McDowell
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn
Commissioner Meredith Attwell Baker



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

June 10, 2010

The Honorable Mark Begich
United States Senate
144 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Begich:

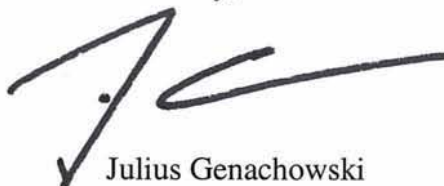
Thank you for your letter regarding data roaming, urging the Commission to act promptly on this issue. I agree that the availability of roaming services to rural communities and access to wireless data service is essential to our economy, public safety, and national security.

On April 21, 2010, the Commission released an *Order on Reconsideration and Second Further Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* that will increase American consumers' access to mobile voice service, wherever and whenever they choose. The *Order on Reconsideration* modifies the automatic roaming obligation that the Commission adopted for voice and related services in 2007, by eliminating the home roaming exclusion. The *Order* creates a framework for voice roaming that will encourage carriers of all sizes to reach reasonable commercial agreements with each other, while also encouraging these carriers to continue investing in the coverage and capacity of existing voice networks.

Consistent with the recommendation of the National Broadband Plan, this action also opens a broad inquiry into the critical issue of data roaming. In the *Second Further Notice*, we examine whether to extend roaming obligations to data services that are provided without interconnection to the public switched network – including mobile broadband services. I have often expressed a belief that there are few areas in communications that present greater promise for our country than mobile – in terms of driving our economy and delivering broad opportunity for all Americans – and our goal must be for America to lead the world in mobile. To promote this goal, we must ensure that American consumers have access to competitive broadband data communications services, and that the United States has the fastest and most extensive mobile networks in the world. This action helps us take the first important steps toward that objective.

I appreciate your interest in this very important matter. We have placed a copy of your letter in the record for this proceeding. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,



Julius Genachowski



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THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
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June 10, 2010

The Honorable Roger Wicker
United States Senate
555 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

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Julius Genachowski